



**Robert Louis Stevenson
Club of Monterey
NEWSLETTER**

***Celebrating the life and
works of Robert Louis
Stevenson since 1994***



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Join the celebration of
Stevenson's birthday online,
<https://rlsday.wordpress.com>
November 9-13

Calendar of Events-
No activities due to Covid.
**Let's look forward to seeing
each other in 2021.**

The President's Message
BY RUTH KROTZER

A world of thanks to **Edna Barker** and **Bob Jaques** for years of serving as our Club Correspondence Secretary and Newsletter Layout Specialist, respectively. Dedication to their multiple tasks has been exemplary!!! Although they're retiring from their positions, they'll remain involved as much as possible with our outstanding Club.

We were unable to have our annual dinner and election of officers in October, but I'm happy to announce that our current Board will continue to capably "(wo)man the ship" into 2021. Thank you to **Elizabeth Anderson, Monica Hudson, Lindy Perez, Harish Joshi, Donna Gibson, Bende Kelly, Keith Decker, Rosemary Smith** and yours truly.

As we continue to "shelter-in-place," reading Robert Louis Stevenson books stimulates our brain and adds interest to our life. Your RLS Club has books by and about our literary hero for sale at reasonable prices. Please review the list at the end of this newsletter.

I'm so glad we had a wonderful "Salon" in February at **Hugo** and **Maureen Bianchini's** home. Otherwise it has been a "non-year" for events. Regardless, you're welcome to keep your membership active for 2021 by providing a \$10.00 check payable to the RLS Club mailed it to: **Lindy Perez**, treasurer --**P.O. Box 51504, Pacific Grove, CA. 93950.**

I'll close with one of my favorite RLS quotes from his essay Lay Morals, "To be wealthy, a rich nature is the first requisite and money but the second. To be of a quick and healthy blood, to share in all honorable curiosities, to be rich in admiration and free from envy, to rejoice greatly in the good of others, to love with such generosity of heart that your love is still a dear possession in absence or unkindness---these are the gifts of fortune which money cannot buy and without which money can buy nothing."

Ruth Anne Krotzer, President-Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey, (831) 601-1894; rkrotzercolts@gmail.com

Best Selling Novelist Dorothy Emily Stevenson: Another Generation of Stevenson Writers

by Robin Chapman

Dorothy Emily Stevenson (1892-1973) was a best-selling novelist who wrote and published almost a book a year from the 1930s, when she found her first success, until a few years before her death. DES, as she was known, was a relative of Robert Louis Stevenson and, like RLS, grew up in Edinburgh, Scotland. She was the wife of an army officer and a mother when these roles together constituted a full-time job in her upper-middle class world. She still managed to produce 45 books with world-wide sales of 7 million, even though she faced another impediment: some of her prime years for writing coincided with the Second World War, when the United Kingdom was threatened—for nearly six years—with a Nazi invasion.

As a child, she had already been discouraged by her family when she told them she hoped to become a writer. Her father was David Alan Stevenson, who, unlike his cousin RLS, became a lighthouse engineer and joined the Stevenson family firm. When he learned of his daughter's ambitions, he refused to send her to university, saying he did not want a "blue stocking" (that is, an intellectual woman) in his family.

"My father was a first cousin of Robert Louis Stevenson and they often played together when they were boys," she wrote in an autobiographical sketch, found after her death. "So it was that from my earliest days I heard a good deal about 'Louis,' and like *Oliver Twist*, I was always asking for more, teasing my father and my aunts for stories about him." She began writing at the age of eight and created a hideout to make this possible. "My head was full of stories and they got lost if I did not write them down," she said. "So I found a place in the box room between two large black trunks with a skylight overhead and I made a little nest where I would not be disturbed. There I sat for hours—and wrote and wrote."



Note the wide-set eyes and elfin expression—traits shared with RLS. DES was the daughter of RLS's cousin Davie.



What a wonderful picture this gives us of a writer—with stories literally bursting from her brain—and I never would have encountered it, nor the author herself, had it not been for the coronavirus pandemic, which closed public libraries throughout California. Desperate for reading material, I began to forage for books in those wooden, free-standing, Little Free Libraries full of used books people have placed in front of their homes. In a Little Free Library in Carmel, California, I found the curiously titled *Miss Bunclie Married*, a paperback reissue of a 1936 book by Dorothy Emily Stevenson. Intrigued, I took it home and discovered a deft comedy of manners about a young writer from an English village. It was so funny, at one point I had to set it down; I was laughing so hard I could no longer see. When I researched the author, I learned of her familial connection to RLS.

I immediately contacted Mitchell Manson, a retired geneticist who is a docent at the Writers' Museum of Edinburgh, knows about RLS, and whom I met in 2018 when he spoke to the Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey. He too was unfamiliar with DES and delighted to hear of my discovery. Was it nature or nurture, I asked him, that produced two such successful authors in two generations of one family? He pointed out that her relationship to RLS—first cousin, once-removed—meant they would have shared about 6.25% of DNA. Not very much you say, but then perhaps just enough to share some characteristics," he said. More likely, he thought, was that DES was inspired by the stories and success of RLS and his relationship to her family. We learned the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust had installed a commemorative plaque in 2016 to mark her childhood home and Mitchell immediately went out to photograph it at 14 Eglinton Crescent, West Edinburgh, New Town (see picture on p. 2).

Once my local library in Silicon Valley re-opened, I learned it had copies of six DES titles. Feeling a bit like a glutton, I put in reservations for all of them, and when they were ready, plunged immediately into *Miss Buncle's Book*, the prequel to *Miss Buncle Married*. The style is a bit like Jane Austen—if Austen's books could have been co-authored by a humorist like P.G. Wodehouse. The plot was about a writer, which made it doubly interesting. As her publisher, Mr. Abbott, ponders: "[He] had never before read a novel about a woman who wrote a novel about a woman who wrote a novel—it was like a recurring decimal, he thought, or perhaps even more like a perspective of mirrors such as tailors use, in which the woman and her novel were reflected back and forth to infinity. It made your brain reel if you pursued the thought too far, but there was no need to do so, unless you wanted to, of course. So much for the main theme."

A few of her most popular titles began to be rediscovered in the 21st century. When her 1934 novel, *Mrs. Tim of the Regiment*, was reissued in 2009, the New York Times gave it a rave. "Miss Stevenson has spiced this tale of British army life with unobtrusive, effortless wit, which often proves deceptively sharp," said the Times. In 2011, her granddaughter, Wendy Simpson, found a box in the attic of the family home in Moffat, Scotland, that held a number of unpublished DES manuscripts. Since then, four of these novels have been released along with a fifth book, appropriately titled *Found in the Attic*, which includes other material DES stashed away. More than 40 of her books are now available on Amazon in various digital formats. Like RLS, DES has inspired fans around the world. Hers call themselves "DESSies" and discuss her work online and at regional gatherings. It is an amazing afterlife for a novelist who has been dead almost half a century.



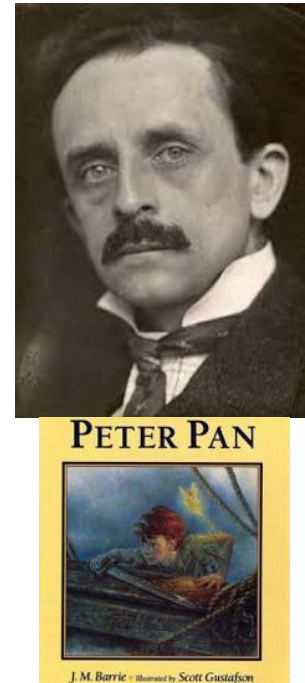
Speaking of which, if you fancy a pilgrimage, you may find a visit to the gentlelady's grave of interest. She is buried with her husband, Major James Reid Peplow, in the Moffat churchyard. He died first and had military rank and so gets top billing on the headstone. She appears second, as his wife, Dorothy Emily. Yet her Christian names are followed by another identifier, almost-but-not-quite in parentheses. The additional words under "Dorothy Emily" are "Authoress D.E. Stevenson." It seems appropriate—and just a little bit funny—that this witty writer would receive an added footnote on her final citation.

Ms. **Robin Chapman** is a longtime broadcast journalist who writes a column for the Los Altos Town Crier and is the author of two books published by the History Press: *Historic Bay Area Visionaries* (2018), which includes a chapter on RLS in Monterey; and *California Apricots: The Lost Orchards of Silicon Valley* (2013). She is a member of the Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey, California..

James Barrie and his lost letters to Stevenson

It may not be surprising to learn that fellow Scots Robert Louis Stevenson and James Barrie were close friends even though they had never met. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*, long admired Stevenson and was about to visit him for the first time when news reached him that his friend had died suddenly in Samoa.

What was unknown until recently is the number of letters written by Barrie to Stevenson that have never been published. As reported in the *Guardian Observer*, Dr. Michael Shaw, a lecturer in Scottish literature at the University of Stirling, stumbled across the missing letters while looking through a neglected box of correspondence at Beinecke Library at Yale University. It may surprise some to learn how much influence Stevenson had on Barrie's storytelling and how Barrie deliberately incorporated Stevenson into his works. A *Friendship in Letters* with correspondence from both writers and compiled by Dr. Shaw is soon to be published.



In Celebration of Stevenson's Birthday: Readings from around the World

Affectionately called his "Unbirthday" in Monterey, November 13 cannot be commemorated publicly in 2020 because the Monterey Library is closed and friends of Robert Louis Stevenson are sheltering at home. RLS, who would have been 170 years old this year, legally gifted his birthday to young friend Annie H. Ide who had been born on Christmas and longed for a separate day to celebrate her birth.

Do not despair: a Party for RLS is coming to us online! Fans around the world, who still hang on his every word, have created a video of readings from his works which will be posted on <https://rlsday.wordpress.com>. From Monterey, **Monica Hudson** and **Keith Decker** recall the months in 1879 he spent on the California coast by reading excerpts from "The Old Pacific Capital" and letters to friends back home. The combined recital is under an hour and will be posted during Stevenson Week, which starts November 9, 2020.

Check the above website periodically for items that will be added by Stevenson lovers from around the world, or to contribute something of your own related to RLS.

New Club Member

Welcome **Mitchell Manson!** - now an official dues-paying member of the RLS Club of Monterey. A genuine Scot, Mitchell has been a friend to many in our Club and happens to be the Acting Chairman of the RLS Club of Edinburgh. We value your friendship and membership, Mitchell, and look forward to seeing you in Monterey or in Scotland.

Updates on Special Projects

Vailima Prayers Set to Music

You may remember that the RLS Club of Monterey donated funds to a musical effort initiated by our Australian friends Neil Adam and Judy Turner to be called *The Windmill Needs the Wind*. The album is now finished and should be ready for distribution this November in plenty of time for holiday gift-giving. Twelve of Stevenson's Vailima prayers have been put to music and rendered beautifully by seven professional musicians. For more information, see <https://www.neiladamandjudyturner.com/windmill>.

New Roof for Stevenson Cottage at Saranac Lake

This spring, the RLS Club donated \$500 to fund a roof replacement at the historic cottage and museum in Saranac Lake, New York, where the Stevensons stayed the winter of 1887/88. Since not enough money has been raised to replace the entire roof, work will be delayed until May 2021 and then completed in sections. Fund-raising with Lantern Bearers appeal is ongoing.

See <http://www.robertlouisstevensonmemorialcottage.com> and click on membership.



The RLS cottage at Saranac Lake, NY

Belated Centennial

The Edinburgh Club was eager to celebrate its 100-year anniversary in 2020 and had made elaborate preparations....only to be derailed by the coronavirus. All activities had to be cancelled, including the publication of the Centennial Book. The RLS Club of Monterey (along with celebrities such as Paul McCartney) has contributed a written tribute about Stevenson and must now wait patiently and with great anticipation for its release.

RLS Book Donation

The Book Committee of the Monterey Club has organized the books donated by Elizabeth Warfel's daughter into several categories, including those to be gifted to special organizations, saved for the volunteers at Stevenson House, or sold to club members and others in support of club activities. Mrs. Warfel was a resident of Scotland and of California who, inspired by a visit to the Stevenson House in Monterey, collected more than 200 books written by RLS, by his associates, and about his life and times. Many of the rare and out-of-print volumes have already found new homes, but others are still available for sale. A long winter sheltering-in-place would be made pleasant indeed by reading the words of Robert Louis Stevenson. If you are interested in purchasing a book, please contact Lindy Perez (lindycap@yahoo.com). The last page of this newsletter has titles and prices.

New look to and delivery of RLS Newsletter

We are using new software to develop the RLS Newsletter and to send out via mailchimp. Our co-editors are **Lindy Perez** (lindycap@yahoo.com) and **Donna Gibson** (dmg6391@gmail.com); please contact them with any news, articles, or delivery issues.

Books for Sale - By and About Robert Louis Stevenson

From Elizabeth Warfel Collection - Proceeds will support the RLS Club of Monterey

Title	Author	Year/Publisher	Description	Price
When the Devil was Well; Hitherto Unpublished story	RLS	1921, Bibliophile Society of Boston	Very Good; w/slipcase; limited edition; earliest prose fiction, 1875	\$50
Poems by RLS; Hitherto Unpublished	RLS	1921, Bibliophile Society of Boston	Very Good; w/slipcase; limited edition	\$50
Stevenson's Workshop	RLS	1921, Bibliophile Society of Boston	Very Good; w/slipcase limited edition; facsimiles of handwriting & drawings	\$50
Prose Pieces by RLS; Hitherto Unpublished	RLS	1921, Bibliophile Society of Boston	Very Good; no slipcase; Limited edition	\$50
A Child's Garden of Verses	RLS	1920, Longmans and Green	Good, green leather, Intro by Andrew Lang; small	\$15
Underwoods	RLS	1887, Chatto & Windus	Good, early edition; tight binding; old nameplate	\$30
Weir of Hermiston	RLS	1896, Scribners	Good, tear on spine; first American edition	\$20
St. Ives	RLS	1898, William Heineman	Good, mark on cover; first English edition; scarce	\$25
Fables	RLS	1896, Scribners	Good, slight water marks; first separate edition	\$25
Yoshida-Torajiro, and Chiushingura	RLS; Hiroshi Hirohashi, ed.	(mid-20 th century)	Good; translation from Japanese	\$5
An Omnibus	RLS; G.B. Stern, ed.	1950	Very Good, w/jacket; includes 4 novels, 5 stories	\$12
RLS Trail in the Cevennes	Alan Castle	1992	Good; Cicerone guide	\$5
Stevenson at Silverado	Anne Roller Issler	1974, paperback, Napa Hist.Society,	Fair; photos of his time in Napa Valley	\$5
The Frail Warrior, Life of RLS	Jean Marie Carre	1930	Very Good; Translated from French	\$10
RLS Man and Writer, volumes 1&2	J.A. Steuart	1924, Sampson Low	Fair; library copy and bookplate	\$20 (for 2)
Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography	Frank McLynn	1993	Very Good, w/jacket; w/photos. opinions	\$15
No Son of Mine	G. B. Stern	1948	Good, some wear; fictional bio; dedicated to Lloyd	\$5
Dr. Hyde and Mr. Stevenson	Harold Winfield Kent	1973	Very Good, w/jacket; about Rev, Hyde in Hawaii	\$25
I Can Remember RLS	Rosaline Masson, ed.	1922, Frederick A. Stokes	Good, w/photographs	\$8
Bibliography of RLS	Col. W.F. Prideaux	Reprinted 1968, original 1917	Very Good; description of all works by RLS up to 1917	\$25
Edinburgh, a Historical Study	Sir Herbert Maxwell	1912, Williams & Norgate	Good,; 64 illustrations, one reference to RLS	\$25